WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An image data correcting device comprising:

    detecting means for detecting an intensity difference between first image data corresponding to a part of a predetermined small area and second image data corresponding to the remaining parts of the predetermined small area;

    determining means for determining whether the first image data corresponds to a halftone image; and

    intensity changing means for changing an intensity of the first image data to a predetermined low intensity, when the intensity difference is equal to or smaller than a first predetermined value and the first image data does not correspond to the halftone image and the intensity of the first image data is equal to or smaller than a second predetermined value.

2.   The image data correcting device as claimed in claim 1, wherein the first predetermined value is determined so that an intensity of at least a part of an image other than the halftone image is equal

5   to or greater than the first predetermined value and an intensity of the halftone image is smaller than the first predetermined value.

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3.   The image data correcting device as claimed in claim 1, wherein the second predetermined value is determined so that a difference between a first

15   intensity difference of the first image data is equal to or greater than the second predetermined value when the first image data corresponds to the halftone image, wherein the first intensity difference is a difference between the intensity of the first image data and an

20   average in intensities of the first image data and the second image data.

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4. The image data correcting device as claimed in claim 1, wherein the predetermined small area is defined by a pixel matrix, and the first image data corresponds to one of pixels located in the center of

5   the pixel matrix.

10   5. The image data correcting device as claimed in claim 4, wherein the pixel matrix is a 3×3 matrix.

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6. The image data correcting device as claimed in claim 1, wherein the predetermined low intensity is equal to or smaller than an intensity of a

20   background of an image from which the predetermined small area is extracted.

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7. The image data correcting device as claimed in claim 1, further comprising smoothing means for smoothing the first image data after the intensity of the first image data is changed.

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8. The image data correcting device as
10 claimed in claim 7, further comprising selecting means for selecting whether to output the first image data before smoothing or after smoothing.

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9. The image data correcting device as claimed in claim 8, wherein the selecting means selects the first image data after smoothing when the first
20 image data corresponds to an image other than the halftone image, and selects the first image data before smoothing when the first image data corresponding to the halftone image.

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10.   An image reading device comprising:

scanning means for scanning an original document to obtain image data and converting the image data into digital form; and

5   an image data correcting device correcting the image data supplied by the canning means,

wherein the image data correcting device comprising:

detecting means for detecting an intensity
10   difference between first image data corresponding to a part of a predetermined small area and second image data corresponding to the remaining parts of the predetermined small area;

determining means for determining whether the
15   first image data corresponds to a halftone image; and

intensity changing means for changing an intensity of the first image data to a predetermined low intensity, when the intensity difference is equal to or smaller than a first predetermined value and the first
20   image data does not correspond to the halftone image and the intensity of the first image data is equal to or smaller than a second predetermined value.

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11. An image forming apparatus comprising:

an image reading device generating image data by scanning an original document, said image reading device including an image data correcting device

5   correcting the image data supplied by the image reading device; and

an image forming device forming a visible image based on the corrected image data supplied by the image data correcting device,

10   wherein the image data correcting device comprising:

detecting means for detecting an intensity difference between first image data corresponding to a part of a predetermined small area and second image data

15   corresponding to the remaining parts of the predetermined small area;

determining means for determining whether the first image data corresponds to a halftone image; and

intensity changing means for changing an

20   intensity of the first image data to a predetermined low intensity, when the intensity difference is equal to or smaller than a first predetermined value and the first image data does not correspond to the halftone image and the intensity of the first image data is equal to or

25   smaller than a second predetermined value.